

FEMA Encourages Winter Weather Preparedness

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – With the winter season approaching, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reminds individuals to be prepared for winter storms and extreme cold. While the danger of severe winter weather varies across the country, everyone can benefit by taking a few easy steps now to prepare for emergencies. A first step, regardless of where you live, is to visit the Ready.gov Web site to find preparedness ideas you can use all year long.

"Severe winter weather can strike at any time. Even areas that normally experience mild winters can be hit with a major snowstorm or extreme cold," said FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate. "I encourage everyone to get an emergency supply kit, develop and practice a family emergency plan and stay informed about emergencies that may affect your area. Families can log onto Ready.gov to learn more."

Severe winter weather can include snow or subfreezing temperatures, strong winds and ice or heavy rain storms. An emergency supply kit both at home and in the car will help prepare you and your family for winter power outages and icy or impassable roads.

Both kits should include a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, extra flashlights and batteries. In addition, your home kit should include a three day supply of food and water. Thoroughly check and update your family's emergency supply kit and add the following supplies in preparation for winter weather:

- Rock salt to melt ice on walkways,
- Sand to improve traction on driveways and sidewalks,
- Snow shovels and other snow removal equipment,
- And adequate clothing and blankets to help keep you warm.

Ensure your family preparedness plan and contacts are up to date and exercise your plan. Learn about emergency plans established in your area by state and local officials and make sure your family plans and contacts are up to date.

Finally, make sure to familiarize yourself with the terms that are used to identify a winter storm hazard and discuss with your family what to do if a winter storm watch or warning is issued. Terms used to describe a winter storm hazard include the following:

- **Freezing Rain** creates a coating of ice on roads and walkways.
- **Sleet** is rain that turns to ice pellets before reaching the ground. Sleet also causes roads to freeze and become slippery.
- **Winter Weather Advisory** means cold, ice and snow are expected.
- **Winter Storm Watch** means severe weather such as heavy snow or ice is possible in the next day or two.
- **Winter Storm Warning** means severe winter conditions have begun or will begin very soon.

For more information and winter preparedness tips, please visit: <http://www.ready.gov/winter>

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.
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